

'Tis St. Valentine's Day, and Oh! Do Not Say Nay.

A BOY'S VALENTINE.

I might begin, "The rose is red,"
(Though that is not so very new,
Or this the boys all think is good,
"If you love me as I love you,"

But, seems to me, a valentine
Is nicer when you do not say
The same old things that every one
Keeps saying in the same old way.

And I asked Jane the other night
What grown up people write about.
She would not answer me at first,
But laughed till I began to pout.

That stopped her, for she saw I meant
The question (and she will not tease).
"Why, love," she said, "and shining eyes,
A kiss, soft hair—just what they please."
It can't be hard if that is all,
So I'll begin by saying this:

"To my dear lady beautiful
I send a valentine and kiss,
The valentine because she has
The loveliest hair and gentle eyes,
The kiss because I love her more
Than any one beneath the skies.
Because she is the kindest, best,
The sweetest lady ever known.
And every year I'll give her one,
The very same, to her alone."

There! Now it's finished. Who will do?
I've thought of one and then another.
Who is there like it? Why, of course,
I'll send it right away to mother.

MISS SALLY.

A VALENTINE STORY BY EDITH SESSIONS
TUPPER.

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"Miss Sally, here's your mail!"
Miss Sally looked over her spectacles at her neighbor's little daughter who had brought her letters, smiled kindly, thanked the child, and rising went to the pantry and brought out one of her crisp oatmeal seed cookies as a reward for her errand.

The little girl seized it with eager hands, and after taking an enormous bite looked solemnly at Miss Sally and went away. Miss Sally settled herself in her high backed, old fashioned rocker to look over

There were, however, several young lads in this country town who would not be won by Miss Sally's kindness or cooking. They stole her apples and trampled down her flower beds. They made faces at her on the street and hurt her by jeering remarks about her condition in life. Young brutes are to be found in every community.

It was from one of these hooligan boys that a blow, destined to hurt and injure the unfortunate woman, came the morning on which this story opens. Miss Sally eyed her three letters with a rapture unknown to those with whom a large mail is a daily occurrence. She held them up and carefully scrutinized the postmarks. She felt of them to discover their thickness. She hesitated for some time before opening them. It was such a treat to have three letters!

At last she opened one which bore the postmark of a distant western town and read a letter from a second cousin who had recently moved toward the setting sun. Miss Sally read Cousin Elvira's letter with relish. There were many bits of family news which greatly interested her.

At last she came to this line: "You never could guess who is living here. Do you remember your old beau, John Terry?"
Miss Sally dropped the letter with a quick exclamation. Did she remember? A tempest shook the lonely soul. The long buried past came back. Youth, beauty, love, hope, passed in hasty and mournful procession before her. The poor, plain old maid was once again a girl, graceful slip of a girl. She saw a face at once handsome and tender, she heard a loving voice.

Poor Miss Sally! It was too much for her. She could not finish the letter. The tears were falling down her thin cheeks as she hastily returned it to the envelope and laid it one side to be read when she was more composed.

"I'll just glance at the others," she thought as she wiped her eyes on her gingham apron. The second letter was merely a note regarding some sewing. The third—ah! When Miss Sally opened that envelope and saw the contents, she felt indeed that her cup was full.

A hideous, comely painted comely valentine met her eye. A frightful old woman, with corkscrew ringlets, huge back, cross eyes, gaunt form, scrawny neck and missing arms, was peering on from the cheap paper. It was labeled "Old Maid," and some wretched doggerel under the picture stated that this object, a withered, grizzly, ugly old hag, was in search of a husband and was a terror to all single men.



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"I'm an out fool. There isn't a fool like an old one." And Miss Sally returned her valentine to the drawer in which it had reposed so many years, then, after burning the abominable picture she had received, went about her sewing, grudgingly resolving she would waste no more time on the past. "I'll finish Elvira's letter this evening." She started to the sewing machine. "That'll be a pleasant way of passing an hour."

The day drew to a close. Twilight deepened into dusk. Miss Sally made her tea and sat down to her lonely evening meal. Occasionally she cast a glance toward Elvira's letter, which still lay unread on the window sill. She wondered what more there was in it about John. At last her curiosity got the better of her, and leaving her second cup of tea untasted she took up the letter, and adjusting her spectacles prepared to read it at all costs.

At that moment a knock came on her street door.
Miss Sally laid down the letter and hastened to answer the summons. In the dusk of the winter evening she saw a man standing there, a tall, well built, well dressed man, who pulled lifted his hat and asked if Miss Sally Staples lived there.

"Yes, sir, walk in," said Miss Sally, all in a flutter.
The stranger entered, and with one quick glance took in the surroundings, the wholesome, neatly furnished room, the fragrant supper, the sewing machine. Then he stole a glance at Miss Sally, noting the plain, stiff gown; the poor, thin, needle pricked hands; the gentle, kindly, pathetic face. Then he took a step or two toward her, and as he gave a start and a half terrified exclamation he caught her in his big brown arms and cried, "Sally, don't you know your old John?"

And the windows of heaven were opened to pour Miss Sally.
After they had quieted down a bit and talked it all over, after Miss Sally had given John his share of her tea and toast and had, moreover, brought out the ear-ward cookies and the red raspberry jam.

"Let's begin with the beginning," she began to tell a little troubled, and a faded face passed over her face.
"Your wife, John," she murmured apologetically. "I declare I was so taken back I never thought one word about your being married. You must excuse my forwardness. I didn't mean no harm." She added humbly.

"My wife!" repeated John. "Why, didn't Elvira Jenkins write you? She told me she would."
"I got a letter from her this morning," said Miss Sally. "but I really didn't have time to read it. Only a faded leaf dropped from the mournful rustling of the old maid who held it tenderly in her tollowed hands."

HE EARNED IT.

A VALENTINE STORY.

Oh, but those were jolly February days, all shine and snow and jingle and bells—that is, for most people. To Laddie it was rather gloomy, though he saw the sun shine and the snow sparkle and heard the sleigh bells tinkle, as everybody did. But Laddie was a little fellow—very little for 7 years—and he hadn't many ways of amusing himself when shut up in his house, especially when mamma was too weak and tired to read to him or invent games. This was the case now, and it was a very hard time for poor Laddie, as you may imagine. He waited on mamma quite cheerfully, however, and helped Hannah, the woman who came now and then to do the heavy housework, with good grace, but still there were many empty hours and some very sad ones.

Mamma's headache seemed to grow worse, instead of better, as the days went by, and often he saw her crying quietly. He knew then that she was thinking of papa, for she always cried when she thought of him. Papa had gone away in a big ship some years ago, long ago, when Laddie was a baby, and the ship had been wrecked, and he never came back. Laddie often asked if there was no hope of his ever coming, but mamma looked so sorry when she said, "I'm afraid not, little one," that he had about given up trying to find out any more.

One day, it was the 13th day of this sparkling February, Hannah sent Laddie down town on an errand, and he gayly set off, glad of any chance to be out, if only for a short time. As he went, he noticed the shop he eagerly looked at the bright pictures their windows presented, wishing he were rich enough to buy some of the lovely things for mamma.

His cheeks burned with excitement as he looked at the gay pictures and thought how surprised and glad his mamma would be if he should send her one.
Without stopping to remember that he owned only three pennies in the world, and that money was scarce, he ran to the shop trying to decide which one of the valentines would be most appropriate for his sweetheart mamma. Finally he chose one which had a blue background, with Cupid riding across it on a rose colored cloud. The card was framed with a gush border and would look very rich on mamma's mantelshelf. So he walked boldly and said to the clerk near the door:

"How much is that blue valentine?"
"Five dollars," answered the clerk, with a queer smile at the small, rather shabby, figure before him. The smile changed to a look of pity, however, as he saw Laddie's eyes fill with tears. He put his hand on the little fellow's shoulder and said, "See here, my boy, there are some very pretty valentines in this shop for 50 cents, and here are some nice ones for 25."

Laddie brightened and then began choosing among the cheaper ones until he remembered that he had 25 cents in a large amount when one's entire fortune consisted of 50 cents. He suddenly looked up and said:
"A fellow couldn't earn 25 cents between now and tomorrow, could he?"
"Why, I can't say he might be trying hard," answered the clerk cheerfully. "There's quite a good bit to be earned sometimes by carrying people's satchels from the station."

So quite hopefully our little man sped away in the direction of the Western station. As he neared the place he saw that the train had already come in, for numbers of people were hurrying toward town in carriages or on foot. Very few of the latter, however, appeared to have much to carry, and the sewing machine had no chance of getting a job. But as he saw a big, good natured looking fellow carrying a small valise, he accosted him eagerly:
"Don't you want me to carry your baggage, sir, please?"
The man looked down at the bit of humanity before him and then at his valise. Then he laughed and loud, shaking so that Laddie felt as though an earthquake were convulsing the pavement beneath him. At last the man found breath to say:

"Well, little fellow, I don't see that I need much help with this thimbleful of baggage, but that man who has just passed has a lot to carry. Maybe he'll hire you."
Before the sentence was finished off darted the boy so fast that he overtook the heavily laden traveler and fairly tangled himself in the long overcoat as he said:
"Will you please let me carry this big satchel? I'll do it cheap!"
This man did not laugh—at least not aloud—and Laddie felt encouraged, though the satchel looked rather formidable.

"Well, youngster," said the stranger, "you don't look as though you could manage such a heavy load, but you may take this small bundle, and I'll carry it as far as Central hotel, for I'm in a good deal of a hurry."
Laddie hesitated. "Would you pay more for the big satchel?" he asked.
"This time the man did laugh and said pleasantly, 'No, carry the small one, and I'll pay you whatever you ask.'"
"Whatever you ask?" Could it be possible! Then he could get the whole sum at once! But no. Perhaps this would seem too much to pay. "I would do no harm to ask, however," so he said, taking the bundle and struggling bravely along:
"Would 25 cents be too much?"
"Well, that's rather a queer sum, but I think I can stand it. Why don't you make it an even quarter, though?"
Then Laddie told all about his valentine plan, and the 3 cents already in his pocket, and the pretty card at the book store which could be bought for a quarter. The gentleman was very much interested and watched his little companion closely as he went. At last, when Laddie stopped to take breath, he said:
"Why don't you ask your papa for the money?"
"I can't get it," he said. "He never has money. I can't remember, and I don't know if he's dead or not, but mamma always cries when she feels about him."
The gentleman stopped suddenly, and looking eagerly into Laddie's upturned face asked one more question:
"What is your name?"
"Mamma calls me Laddie, but my real name is Lawrence Raymond. That was papa's name."

which sounded almost as wonderful as Robinson Crusoe. At last they reached the door, and Laddie rushed in, crying excitedly:
"Mamma, it's come back—the valentine—papa—25 cents—oh, dear!"

Mamma gave a start and a joyful cry. Then suddenly Laddie found himself more warmly embraced, this time, however, in two pairs of arms instead of one, and he felt queer to see both mamma and the new found papa crying over him.

But the queer feeling gave place to a most happy one when after while he saw mamma sitting at the table with a bright look he had never seen on her face before and heard her say to papa:
"Laddie has brought me the best valentine I ever received!"

An Expensive Luxury.
In olden times St. Valentine's day cost people no inconsiderable sums. "Peppys' Diary" records some curious customs during the reign of the "merry monarch," Charles II. Thus Mr. Peppys says in his diary on Valentine's day, 1667: "This morning came in to my wife's bedchamber (I being up dressing myself) little Will Mercer, to be her valentine, and brought her name written upon blue paper in gold letters done by himself. Very pretty, and we were both well pleased with it. But I in also this year my wife's valentine, and it will cost me £5, but that I must have laid out if we had not been valentines." Later he adds, "I find that Mrs. Pierce's little girl is my valentine, she having drawn me, which I was not sorry for, it costing me of something more than I must have given to others." Of Miss Stuart, who became Duchess of Richmond, Peppys wrote, in describing her jewels, that the Duke of York was once her valentine and presented her a jewel valued at £800, or £4,000. Lord Mandeville was thus a giver in a jewel worth £300. Being drawn as valentine imposed a certain obligation on the donors. Peppys wrote on another Valentine's day: "This evening my wife did with great pleasure show me her collection of jewels, increased by the ring she hath made lately as my valentine's gift this year, a Turkey stone set with diamonds. With this said what she had reckoned that she hath above £100 worth of jewels of other or other, and I am glad of it, for it is fit the which should have something to content herself with." The word "wretch," it must be remembered, was used in Peppys' time as a term of great endearment.



For Faint Hearts.

Don't get discouraged, young man. Asylums may be necessary, but boarding houses are not. Homes are a luxury, and you do well to try to start one. There will be obstacles enough to your purpose without inventing any for you or your going, and the sewing machine has no chance of getting a job. But as he saw a big, good natured looking fellow carrying a small valise, he accosted him eagerly:
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WON BY A VALENTINE.

Bells ringing, girls appearing in the halls and public rooms, forming groups with a general air of suppressed excitement, marked St. Valentine's day at Lewiston school. Charma Sidney was wandering idly up and down the lower hall with her chin, "Goose," hanging on her arm. "Goose" was her nickname through her gentle disposition and artless, straightforward manner. Charma said plaintively, "How I wish there was a valentine for me, but I know of a certain one likely to remember me in that way whom I don't want to nevertheless. I wouldn't accept a valentine from him—no, not if he brought it himself. Jack Landon may marry whoever he wants to. He can't have me."

"Goose" looked up admiringly and thought that any one who declined chances with such readiness must be great indeed and wondered if she could ever do the same.
A little sharper tingle than usual of the bell below aroused Charma from the reverie into which she had fallen; then some one called from the hall, "Miss Sidney!" She flew down the broad staircase, assured that a valentine had come for her, and indeed was soon kneeling in the midst of a crowd of girls over a box of fragrant roses reposing snugly in their cotton bed, the white satin streamers half hiding a tiny card that had slipped down among them unnoticed. Charma rescued the card somewhat triumphantly and read, "Mr. Jack Landon." But this was not all. As she knelt above them, lifting them from the floor and held it out with a flourish, crying: "Look, look, Charma Sidney, what has your valentine meant! You'll have him now, won't you?" But Charma was spell-bound for the moment by the message on a little slip of paper found under the roses and which she read with flashing cheeks.

"Must I go back?" it said. "Love, I love you. Cannot I come to you, sweet-heart mine? My love for you is as pure as the roses I send, precious as this little diamond and as lasting as all eternity. Let me come."
Charma was our only postgraduate for the year—that is, after a regular graduation she had returned to school to "brush up" in elective studies. Her reappearance on opening day had made us both glad and sorry—glad because she was a good companion, sorry for the reason—but therein lies the key to my St. Valentine romance.

Lewiston holds before its pupils the old fashioned idea of woman's sphere as the head of a home with all the term implies, and if graceful, stately Charma, with her speaking gray eyes, wavy brown tresses and not at all of a student nor bluestocking temperament had been obliged to return to school to cover up her failure in woman's natural role what would become of us girls, a score of seniors, when we came to get trooping out to conquer, or, alas, to be conquered by the fate that pursues old maid? Yes, we did love her, and we couldn't understand why the rest of us, kind, particularly mankind, didn't love her too. The secret of it she had guarded well, but we forgave her that when she shared with us the secret of her valentine gift.

"Jack Landon is my dearest friend," she said, but with blushes, when we had caressed away the tears.
"How is it you never told us?"
"You see, we weren't engaged—that is, he hadn't really proposed, but it wasn't his fault," pleaded Charma. "It was mine."
"You loved him and wouldn't own it, even to us girls?"
"Yes, I did love him, but every time he wanted to say something to the point I turned it off, pretended not to understand, or to be interested in astronomy or botany or music or any subject at hand that I could turn to as a foil. Girls, I confess I bluffed him simply because I was fascinated with the game."
The confusion cleared the atmosphere for all concerned. Jack soon followed his valentine in person and gave Charma no chance to turn Cupid's shaft away again. Like a good soldier, when beaten in siege, he had adopted a ruse de guerre, for which the day had given a capital excuse. Our star pupil returned with us until commencement, and as she went away from Lewiston the echoes of schoolgirl goodbyes were mingled with those of wedding bells and congratulatory as to Jack Landon's bride, who was a son by a valentine.

EDITH HOWARD.

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